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TO: Supervisor Yvonne Brathwaite Burke, Chair
Supervisor Gloria Molina
Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky
Supervisor Don Knabe
Supervisor Michael D. Antonovich

FROM: J. Tyler McCauley 
Auditor-Controller

SUBJECT: **GROUP HOME PROGRAM MONITORING REPORTS – PENNACLE
FOUNDATION, INC. CARSON STREET BOYS, CORNING AVENUE
GIRLS, AND LITTLE WINGS GIRLS FACILITIES**

We have completed a review of the three group homes operated by the Pennacle Foundation, Inc., Carson Street Boys (Pennacle Carson), Corning Avenue Girls (Pennacle Corning), and Little Wings Girls (Little Wings) facilities. Each home is licensed with the Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS) and the Probation Department (Probation).

Pennacle Carson is a four-bed facility located in the Fourth Supervisorial District that provides care for boys ages 9-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Pennacle Carson was providing services for four Los Angeles County DCFS children.

Pennacle Corning is a four-bed facility and Little Wings is a three-bed facility located in the Second Supervisorial District that provide care for girls ages 9-17 years who exhibit behavioral, social, and emotional difficulties. At the time of the monitoring visit, Pennacle Corning was providing services for four Los Angeles County DCFS children and Little Wings was providing services for two DCFS children.

Scope of Review

The purpose of the review is to verify that the three agencies are providing services outlined in their Program Statements. Additionally, the review covers basic child safety and licensing issues. The review included an evaluation of each home's Program Statement, internal policies and procedures, child case records, a facility inspection, and interviews with two children placed in each of the respective homes at the time of the reviews. The interviews with the residents were designed to obtain their perspectives on the program services provided by the group home and to ensure adherence to the Foster Youth Bill of Rights.

Summary of Findings

Generally, all three group homes were providing the services outlined in their Program Statements. However, we did note various areas where improvements are needed.

Pennacle Carson

Pennacle Carson needs to make some repairs and improvements to the facility; provide residents with a computer and additional books; improve its Needs and Services Plans and ensure the residents' authorized representatives participate in plan development; write Quarterly Reports that focus on the goals of the Needs and Services Plan; provide a tutor; post their activities schedule; maintain current court authorizations for the administration of psychotropic medication; and provide residents with the opportunity to increase their weekly allowance.

Pennacle Corning

Pennacle Corning needs to provide residents with a computer and additional books; improve its Needs and Services Plans; provide a tutor; post their activities schedule; maintain current court authorizations for psychotropic medication; allow residents to refuse medication without reprisal; and provide residents with the opportunity to increase their weekly allowance.

Little Wings

Little Wings needs to provide residents with a computer and additional books; improve its Needs and Services Plans and Quarterly Reports; and provide a tutor.

Attached are detailed reports of the findings for each home.

Review of Report

We discussed our reports with the agency's management. The agency's management has agreed to provide DCFS with a written corrective action plan within fifteen business days from the date of this report. We thank the management and staff for their cooperation during our reviews.

If you have any question, please contact me, or have your staff contact Patrick McMahon at (213) 974-0729.

JTM:PM:CC

Attachment

c: David E. Janssen, Chief Administrative Officer
Violet Varona-Lukens, Executive Officer
Public Information Office
Audit Committee
David Sanders, Ph.D., Director, DCFS
Richard Shumsky, Chief Probation Officer
Greer Davis, Executive Director, Pennacle Foundation, Inc.

**Pinnacle Group Home
Carson Street Boys Facility
6133 East Carson Street
Lakewood, CA 90713
License No.: 197803159
Rate Classification Level: 14**

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Pinnacle Foundation, Carson Street, Inc. operates three agencies, one being the Pinnacle Carson Street facility (Pinnacle Carson). Located in the city of Lakewood, the facility is attractive and blends in with other homes in the neighborhood. The gated backyard, with a well maintained lawn area and a large shade tree, offers additional recreational and relaxation opportunities.

Although the interior of the home is generally neat and clean, there are several areas that require improvement.

The front porch area is in need of cleaning and painting. The front door requires cleaning as does the window and windowsill to the east of the front door. In the dining room, the hardwood floor is damaged and soiled; the seat cushions on the dining room chairs need cleaning; and the blinds are not clean. In addition, the small couch in the den is broken.

The residents are permitted to personalize their bedrooms. Resident bedrooms are furnished with two twin beds, one chest of drawers, and one or two nightstands. The bedrooms are small, crowded, and unkempt.

There is age-appropriate play equipment in the home including table games, a TV, VCR and video games. There are no computers and an insufficient supply of books and resource material.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen foods, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. Pennacle Carson management**
 - a. Clean and paint the front porch and entryway area.**
 - b. Repair the dining area hardwood floors.**
 - c. Clean the cushions on the dining room chairs.**
 - d. Clean the window blinds in the dining area.**
 - e. Replace the small couch in the den.**
 - f. Maintain resident bedrooms in a comfortable and orderly manner.**
 - g. Provide residents with a computer and a supply of books and resource material.**

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents met the agency's population criteria as outlined in the program statement and received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into Pennacle's program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) do not consistently state the tasks or goals in a clear and/or measurable manner. One NSP was signed by the resident, his authorized representative and the clinician. The other NSP lacked the signature of the resident's authorized representative and there was no documentation to indicate that the authorized representative was a participant.

Because the goals of the NSP are unclear, the Quarterly Reports do not focus on the goals of the NSPs.

Both residents were receiving individual and group therapy sessions.

Recommendations

2. Pennacle Carson management

- a. Develop comprehensive Needs and Services Plans that are specific and measurable.**
- b. Provide authorized representatives the opportunity to participate in the development and/or update of the residents' Needs and Services Plans.**
- c. Write quarterly reports that focus on the goals in the Needs and Services Plans.**

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents attended summer school and their files contained current Individualized Education Plans and up-to-date report cards. The residents indicated that agency's staff supports them in handling school related matters; the facility manager attends school conferences and meetings. The residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of educational stimulation away from school on a daily basis. Although the residents function at a low academic level, the agency does not provide a tutor to work with them.

The residents have participated in vocational-type emancipation classes at school. In addition, the agency offers the residents opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs provided by the Department of Children and Family Services in conjunction with the Community College Foundation. The facility offers basic emancipation training that includes household chores, personal hygiene and accessing public transportation.

The residents were not employed.

Recommendations

- 3. Pennacle Carson management provide a tutor to assist residents with school work.**

IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The agency provides appropriate activities for the residents and the residents offer suggestions as to where they want to go. Although the residents are encouraged to provide input in the process of planning activities, the high level of care they require limits their freedom and ability to pursue self-selected activities on their own.

Agency activities include going to the local YMCA, the movies, and local restaurants. In addition, residents go to amusement parks, organized sporting events, arcades, the beach, and go-cart racing. The agency provides transportation and supervision at the activities which occur during the week and on weekends.

The children have ample free time and the opportunity to engage in indoor and/or outdoor recreational activities. Such activities include reading magazines, table games, video games, watching television and videos, throwing a baseball, bouncing a basketball, and relaxing in the backyard.

Activities are noted in the daily logs, but a schedule of planned recreational and educational activities for residents is not posted as required by the Statement of Work.

Recommendations

- 4. Pennacle Carson management post the schedule of planned recreational and educational activities for residents.**

V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: There were four residents placed in the agency at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the four residents prescribed psychotropic medication.

Comments:

Court authorizations for the four residents prescribed psychotropic medication are not current. However, documentation confirms that there are current psychiatric evaluations/reviews for each resident.

The distribution log is clear, accurate and organized. The distributor initials the date and time as medication is given to the child; a full signature identifies the distributor's initials.

Recommendations

- 5. Pennacle Carson management maintain current court authorizations for each resident prescribed psychotropic medication.**

VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents were presented with the policies, rules and regulations upon arrival in placement. Both residents felt safe in the home and reported that they are generally treated with respect. Further, they feel that the staff is respectful and sensitive to their individuality. They indicated that a sufficient number of staff is always in the home when residents are present. Both residents rated their rooms and the overall agency as "good." The residents stated that they have freedom to get snacks and water; are satisfied with the food; and receive a sufficient amount of food.

The residents are allowed to telephone their authorized representatives and their family members. The residents have sufficient privacy when making and receiving telephone calls and having face-to-face visitors. Both residents have chosen not to attend church.

Both residents indicated that they were informed of their medication and that they receive routine and as needed medical and dental care.

Upon placement, the residents are familiarized with the rewards and discipline practices in the agency. The rewards are provided to residents whose behavior is exemplary over a week or longer. The rewards consist of outings at the agency's expense. The residents feel that consequences and rewards are meted out in a fair manner.

Residents are expected to maintain their bedrooms in an orderly manner and complete household chores that they do feel are too demanding or hard.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Pennacle Carson provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The agency supplies its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars, and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to the residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The agency provides its residents with a fair minimum weekly allowance. However, as required in the Statement of Work, there is no behavioral system in place which gives residents the opportunity to increase their weekly allowance.

The agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

Both residents have been provided the opportunity to maintain a life book, however, neither has chosen to have one.

Recommendations

- 6. Pennacle Carson management implement a behavioral system which gives residents the opportunity to increase their weekly allowance.**

**Pennacle Group Home
Corning Avenue Girls Facility
5643 Corning Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90056
License No.: 198202803
Rate Classification Level: 14**

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Pennacle Foundation, Inc. operates three group homes, one being the Corning Avenue facility (Pennacle Corning). Pennacle Corning is attractive and blends in with other homes in the neighborhood. The backyard lawn area is well maintained and the landscaping is attractive offering residents an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors in a private and secure setting.

The interior of the home is spacious, orderly and clean. The residents are able to personalize their bedrooms with items such as their CD players, stuffed animals, posters, certificates, and family pictures. The bedrooms are attractive and spacious.

There is age-appropriate play equipment in the home including table games, a TV, VCR and video games. However, there are no computers and an insufficient supply of books and resource material.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen foods, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. Pennacle Corning management provide residents with a computer and a larger supply of books and resource material.**

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents meet the agency's population criteria as outlined in their program statement and received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) are realistic and time specific but do not consistently state the tasks in a clear and/or measurable manner. The residents and the clinician who authored the NSPs appropriately signed them and each NSP was faxed to the residents' authorized representatives.

The Quarterly Reports are current, comprehensive, timely, complete, and focus on the goals in the NSP.

Both residents are receiving individual and group therapy sessions.

Recommendations

- 2. Pennacle Corning management develop Needs and Services Plans that are specific and measurable.**

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents attend summer school and their files contain current Individualized Education Plans and up-to-date report cards. The residents indicated that agency's staff supports them in handling school related matters and the facility manager attends school conferences and meetings. The residents reported that they are provided with a sufficient amount of educational stimulation away from school on a daily basis.

Although the residents function at a low academic level, the agency does not provide a tutor to work with them.

The residents have participated in vocational-type emancipation classes at school. In addition, the agency offers the residents additional opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs provided by the Department of Children and Family Services in conjunction with the Community College Foundation. The facility offers basic emancipation training that includes household chores, meal preparation, personal hygiene and accessing public transportation.

The residents are not employed.

Recommendations

- 3. Pennacle Corning management provide a tutor to assist the residents with school work.**

IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Pennacle Corning provides appropriate activities for the residents and the residents offer suggestions as to where they want to go. Although the residents are encouraged to provide input in the process of planning activities, the high level of care they require limits their freedom and ability to pursue self-selected activities on their own.

Pennacle Corning's activities include going to the movies, the mall, and local restaurants. In addition, they go to amusement parks, arcades, the beach, and the hair salon. Pennacle Corning provides transportation and supervision at the activities which occur during the week and on weekends.

The children have ample free time and the opportunity to engage in indoor and/or outdoor recreational activities. Such activities include reading magazines, table games, video games, watching television and videos, relaxing in the backyard, and listening to music.

Activities are noted in the daily logs but a schedule of planned recreational and educational activities for residents is not posted as required by the Statement of Work.

Recommendations

- 4. Pennacle management post the schedule of planned recreational and educational activities for residents.**

V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: There were four residents placed in the agency at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the four residents prescribed psychotropic medication.

Comments:

Court authorizations for the four residents prescribed psychotropic medication are not current. Documentation confirms that there are current psychiatric evaluations/reviews for each resident prescribed psychotropic medication and the prescribing psychiatrist consistently sees the applicable residents on a monthly basis.

The distribution log is clear, accurate and organized. The distributor initials the date and time as medication is given to the child; a full signature identifies the distributors initials.

Recommendations

- 5. Pennacle Corning management maintain current court authorizations for each resident prescribed psychotropic medication.**

VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents were presented with the policies, rules and regulations when arriving in placement. Both residents felt safe in the home and reported that they were treated with respect. Further, they felt that the staff is respectful and sensitive to their individuality. They indicated that a sufficient number of staff is always in the home when residents are present. Both residents rated their rooms and the overall agency as “good.” The residents stated that they have freedom to get snacks and water; are satisfied with the meals; and receive a sufficient amount of food.

The residents are appropriately allowed to telephone their authorized representatives and their family members. They have sufficient privacy when making and receiving telephone calls and face-to-face visitors. Both residents indicated that they have religious freedom.

The residents reported that they were informed of their medication. One resident indicated that she does not agree to take the medication. However, she realizes that a refusal will result in a Special Incident Report being written and maybe early bed time. This was discussed with group home administrative staff who acknowledged that residents are strongly encouraged to take their medication because they become unmanageable without it. Management should reinforce to residents their right to refuse medication without experiencing punitive consequences.

Both residents stated that they receive routine and as-needed medical and dental care.

Upon placement, the residents are familiarized with the rewards and discipline practices

in the home. The rewards are provided to residents whose behavior is exemplary over a week or longer and consist of an outing, compliments of the agency, or shopping at “the agency store” using your behavior tokens. The residents felt that consequences and rewards are meted out in a fair manner.

Residents are expected to maintain their bedrooms in an orderly manner and are required to complete household chores that are rotated on a weekly basis among the residents. The residents do not feel the household tasks are too demanding or hard.

Recommendations

- 6. Pennacle Corning management reinforce residents’ right to refuse medication without punitive consequences.**

VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Corning Avenue provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The agency supplies its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars, and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to the residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The agency provides its residents with a fair minimum weekly allowance. However as noted in the Statement of Work, there is no behavioral system in place which gives residents the opportunity to increase their weekly allowance. Instead, residents are provided with tokens which serve as incentives for good behavior. These tokens can be used at the agency store.

The agency provides residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

The residents have photo albums, in which they keep pictures of themselves, family members, and other important people.

Recommendations

- 7. Pennacle Corning management implement a behavioral system which gives residents the opportunity to increase their weekly allowance.**

**Pennacle Group Home
Little Wings Girls Facility
4324 Fifth Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90008
License No.: 198203831
Rate Classification Level: 14**

I. FACILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

(Facility Based - No Sample)

Method of assessment – Observation and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Pennacle Group Homes operate three group homes (GHs) one being the Little Wings facility. The exterior of the home is attractive and blends well with other homes in the neighborhood. The back area is fenced in and has a nice shaded patio area. It is well maintained and offers the residents an opportunity to enjoy the outdoors in a private and secure setting.

The interior of the home is well furnished, spacious, and clean. The residents have their own bedrooms which they can personalize. Each bedroom is attractive and nicely decorated.

There is some age-appropriate play equipment in the home including table games, a TV, VCR, and video games. There are no computers and an insufficient supply of books and resource material.

There is a sufficient supply of frozen foods, meat, canned goods, bakery items, and fresh fruit properly stored.

Recommendations

- 1. Little Wings management provide residents with a computer and a larger supply of books and resource material.**

II. PROGRAM SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents meet the agency's population criteria as outlined in the program statement and received a complete initial diagnostic assessment after being admitted into the program.

The Needs and Services Plans (NSPs) do not consistently state the tasks or goals in a clear and/or measurable manner. The residents and the clinician who authored the NSPs appropriately signed them and each NSP was faxed to the residents' authorized representative.

Because the goals of the NSP are unclear, the Quarterly Reports do not focus on the goals of the NSPs.

Both residents receive individual and group therapy sessions.

Recommendations

- 2. Little Wings Group Home management develop Needs and Services Plans that are specific and measurable.**

Ensure quarterly reports focus on the goals in the Needs and Services Plan.

III. EDUCATIONAL AND EMANCIPATION SERVICES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Both residents are enrolled in school. One resident attends a non-public school which the other resident will soon be attending.

Both files contain current Individualized Education Plans and up-to-date report cards. The residents indicate that little wing's staff supports them in handling school related matters; the facility manager attends school conferences and meetings. The residents report that they are provided with a sufficient amount of educational stimulation away from school on a daily basis. Although the residents function at a low academic level, the GH does not provide a tutor to work with them.

The residents participate in various emancipation activities at Little Wing's facility. Such activities include household chores, meal preparation, completing activities for daily living, scheduling mandatory appointments, planning recreational events, and accessing public transportation. This agency also provides parental support to the parenting resident. Little Wings offers the residents additional opportunities to participate in emancipation and vocational programs provided by the Department of Children and Family Services in conjunction with the Community College Foundation.

The residents are not employed.

Recommendations

3. Little Wings management provide a tutor to assist residents with school work.

IV. RECREATION AND ACTIVITIES

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Little Wings provides appropriate activities for the residents and encourages them to provide input in the process of planning activities. Activities are individualized according to the resident's ability to appropriately engage in the stated activity. Although the agency supports individual interests, the high level of care the residents require limits their freedom and ability to pursue self-selected activities on their own. GH activities include going to the movies, the mall, and local restaurants. In addition, they go to amusement parks, arcades, the beach, and the hair salon. The group home provides transportation and supervision at the activities which occur during the week and on weekends.

The children have ample free time and the opportunity to engage in indoor and/or outdoor recreational activities. Such activities include reading magazines, table games, video games, watching television and videos, relaxing in the patio, and listening to music.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

V. PSYCHOTROPIC MEDICATION

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: There were two residents placed in the group home at the time of the review. A review of case files was conducted for the two residents prescribed psychotropic medication.

Comments:

The residents prescribed psychotropic medication have current court authorizations. Documentation confirms that there are current psychiatric evaluations/reviews for each resident prescribed psychotropic medication and that the prescribing psychiatrist consistently sees the applicable residents on a monthly basis.

The distribution log is clear, accurate and organized. The distributor initials the date and time as medication is given to the child; a full signature identifies the distributor's initials.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VI. PERSONAL RIGHTS

Method of assessment – Resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

The residents were presented with the policies, rules and regulations when arriving in placement. Both residents felt safe in the home and report that they are treated with respect. Further, they felt that the staff is respectful and sensitive to their individuality.

The residents indicated that a sufficient number of staff is always in the home when residents are present. Both rated their rooms and the overall group home as "very good." The resident stated that they have freedom to get snacks and water, are satisfied with the meals, and receive a sufficient amount of food.

The residents are allowed to telephone their authorized representatives and their family members. They have sufficient privacy when making and receiving telephone calls and having face-to-face visitors. Both residents indicated that they have religious freedom.

Both residents indicated that they were informed of their medication and that they receive routine and as needed medical and dental care.

Upon placement, the residents are familiarized with the rewards and discipline practices in the group home. The rewards are provided to residents whose behavior is exemplary over a week or longer and consist of an outing, compliments of the agency, or shopping at "the agency store" using your behavior tokens. The residents feel that consequences and rewards are meted out in a fair manner.

Residents are expected to maintain their bedrooms in an orderly manner complete household chores that they do not feel are too demanding or hard.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.

VII. CLOTHING AND ALLOWANCE

Method of assessment – Review of relevant documents and resident interviews

Sample size for resident interviews: Two

Comments:

Little Wings provides appropriate clothing, items of necessity, and allowances to the residents. The agency supplies its residents with the required monthly clothing allowance in the amount of fifty dollars, and the residents are given the opportunity to select their own clothes. Clothing provided to the residents is of good quality and of sufficient quantity.

The agency provides its residents with a fair minimum weekly allowance that is increased based on a behavioral system. In addition, they are provided with behavior incentives that include getting professional manicures, pedicures, and shopping at the agency store.

The group home provides residents with adequate personal care items and sufficient, secure space to store their personal items.

One resident reported that she has a photo album and a camera, which she brought with her to Little Wings. The other resident reported that she has a lot of pictures that she keeps in her drawer.

Recommendations

There are no recommendations for this section.